



MEDFLAG 10

Medical Capabilities and Readiness Exercise
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

U.S. Africa Command Vignette

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" MEDFLAG 10 was a moment of intense scientific , technical, social, and psychological communion in perfect harmony between the American forces and FARDC's respective health services." Colonel Gilbert Kabanda, Surgeon General, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Overview

MEDFLAG 10, a bilateral medical training exercise, was conducted in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo in September 2010. The two-week exercise was designed to enhance medical capabilities and readiness for U.S. and Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC). It combined subject matter expert exchanges to develop skills required by the FARDC Unit Medical Immediate Response (UMIR) and U.S. medical personnel. The event culminated in a one day Mass Casualty exercise.

Expanding UMIR capability will allow the FARDC to develop mobile surgical units to provide urgent, initial forward resuscitative treatment, damage control surgery and post-operative treatment to stabilize casualties for evacuation in support of units engaged in combat operations and civilians requiring medical care in disaster situations within the national community.

The Team

The FARDC and U.S. Army Africa co-led the exercise. Participants included twenty medics from each of the four UMIR Companies located in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Bukavu and Kananga along with four combat medics who were trained during Operation Olympic Chase in Kisangani. Soldiers from the 814th Medical Company, North Dakota National Guard supported the mass casualty portion of the exercise.



The Bottom Line

Kinshasa, DRC - Members of the Unit Medical Immediate Response (UMIR) triage and treat patients during a mass casualty exercise.

UMIR medics worked with soldiers from the 814th Medical Company, North Dakota National Guard to improve their ability to treat wounded soldiers and civilian personnel.

Objectives

The exercise objectives were to increase interoperability and strengthen relationships between the U.S. and FARDC, increase medical response capacity for UMIR teams and U.S. medical personnel, validate UMIR concept for disaster response and improve the image of the FARDC both internationally and in the DRC.

Outcome

MEDFLAG is a key program in U.S. efforts to partner with the DRC to develop a professional Congolese military that is accountable to civilian authority provides stability and protects its citizens.

As the FARDC further expands their capability the importance

of a functional military medical service cannot be overlooked. Past experience has shown that soldiers who are provided basic necessities, including clean food and water, adequate housing and medical care are better able to defend the population they are assigned to protect. It is unrealistic to expect soldiers to fight if there is no system in place to treat the wounded. The challenge today is to simultaneously develop the FARDC medical capability, while also rehabilitating and reconstructing health facilities, developing human resources for health and improving access to these services for both active duty and dependents. U.S. AFRICOM is committed to helping rebuild the FARDC medical service and views it as a vital component of Security Sector Reform.